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14. ABSTRACT Since 1991, the Somali people have existed without a functioning government. Poverty, clan clashes, and western influences have left Somalia lifeless and without direction. In 2006, prominent Somali Muslim men sought to bring order and peace to their people. Their wartime experience in Afghanistan and adoption of a Taliban-style Islam gave them a foundation for bringing order to their fellow Somalis. These men would emerge from the ashes of an Ethiopia encroachment into Somalia, one that would last until December 2008, and form a group calling itself Al-Shabaab or the Mujahidin Youth Movement (MYM). This paper which is based on open source information from reporting out of Somalia attempts to identify the major clans, clan culture, and dynamics of Somali centers of power. More importantly, this paper uses antidotal violence numbers from the National Counter-terrorism center to suggest whether the Somali government is making or not making progress in establishing peace.				
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Living in the shadows of two conflicting sides, the people of Somalia have been watching on the sidelines as two team's battle back and forth for inches on the football field of life. However, this time, a penalty can mean death, loss of an official position, and even the confidence of the fans in the stadium. On one side of the game is a group of young men, some fearless, only hoping to survive to the next day. Knowing full well they are only pawns in what has been termed by the western world as "the war on terror." But, why would the United States want to interfere in their struggle? Not sure whether they are being lead to victory or death, many of these same young men recite passages out of the Koran to justify their battles that will surely bring death to some of their brothers. On the other side is a dysfunctional team, only existing due to the funding and intelligence that has been poured into their security forces, their African Union protectors, and the strength of their Western backers who watch carefully to determine what will be their next play. On this side are also young men - men who were volunteered or volunteered to fight for a Somali government and leader who a couple of years ago were also on the wrong side of the game.

In Somalia, time has stood still. For despite the outpouring of the world's attention, the people are no better off and some would say even worst off than three years ago.¹ Critics that initially blamed the Bush administration for adopting a misguided strategy in 2007 now are critical of President Obama's adoption of his predecessor's strategy. And, as mentioned before, Somalia has been the recipient of aid from the United Nations, the African Union, and humanitarian organizations; yet, millions of Somalis continue to pour over their borders to escape the bloodshed. Being alive in a refugee camp is better than being dead, disfigured, or

forced to adopt sides. Children and women are being forced to either serve as soldiers or supporters of this nightmarish conflict. Yet, the west continues to pour millions of dollars without any real measures of success. In previous studies, international organizations, academic scholars, military analysts, and Somali watchers have provided excellent expert analysis of the Somalia conflict, by primarily using news reporting, interviews, and other sources to illustrate their views of the conflict. In this paper, I intend to use both qualitative, quantitative data to provide my assessment of whether the Transitional Federal Government and their allies have been able to develop some control of Somalia or whether the funneling of resources into Somalia has been for naught.

Introduction

For the last two years, southern and central Somalia has been embroiled in a conflict ostensibly based on religion. It is a conflict intimately tied to notions of national liberation sentiment, clan loyalties, and admittedly, varying interpretations of Islam. The aggressive nature of the conflict has resulted in thousands of deaths, the destruction of sacred monuments, and brother-on-brother, clan-on-clan battles. On one side there is the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its African Union and international supporters. On the other side there is the the Mujahidin Youth Movement (MYM), also known as Al-Shabaab, and its affiliated fighters and militias.²

The battle between these two groups has been waged on the streets of Mogadishu, in the desolate towns and villages of central and southern Somalia, and through a sophisticated media and on-line front.³ Al-Shabaab has gained increasing attention in the last year from friends and

enemies within Somalia and the Horn of Africa, the Muslim world, and international counter-terrorism experts. The group has been warmly praised by al-Qa'ida and several of its regional affiliates in the past year, and rhetorical support from independent *salafi-jihadis* has demonstrated growing interest in the Somali theater. Indeed, MYM's increased popularity and resonance as they engage in battles on the ground and the virtual world of jihadi web forums has been astonishing, especially considering the group's relatively recent formation as an independent organization with minimal local guidance and financial support from al-Qa'ida Central.

ROLE OF ISLAM AND CLANS IN SOMALIA

Some of the parties who are trying to overthrow the government now are increasingly using Islam as a mechanism to increase popular support against the government. In order to fully appreciate the Somali situation, it is important to understand the role Islam has taken in Somalia as both a populist response to perceived Western encroachment as well as a political order to fill the governance gap that has persisted for nearly two decades.

First and foremost, it is important to note that Islam in Somalia was not always practiced with extremism. Mystical Sufi brotherhoods have long been prevalent in Somali Islam. Alongside a peaceful Islamic current, there has also been a more reactionary, extremist one. Socialism in the 1950s and 1960s diminished the role of Muslim leaders and certain institutions traditionally controlled by religious scholars were transferred to secular authorities. Although the new government was professedly Islamic, its actions both disenfranchised and disenchanted some Somalis who followed the regional current of Islamic revivalism. The

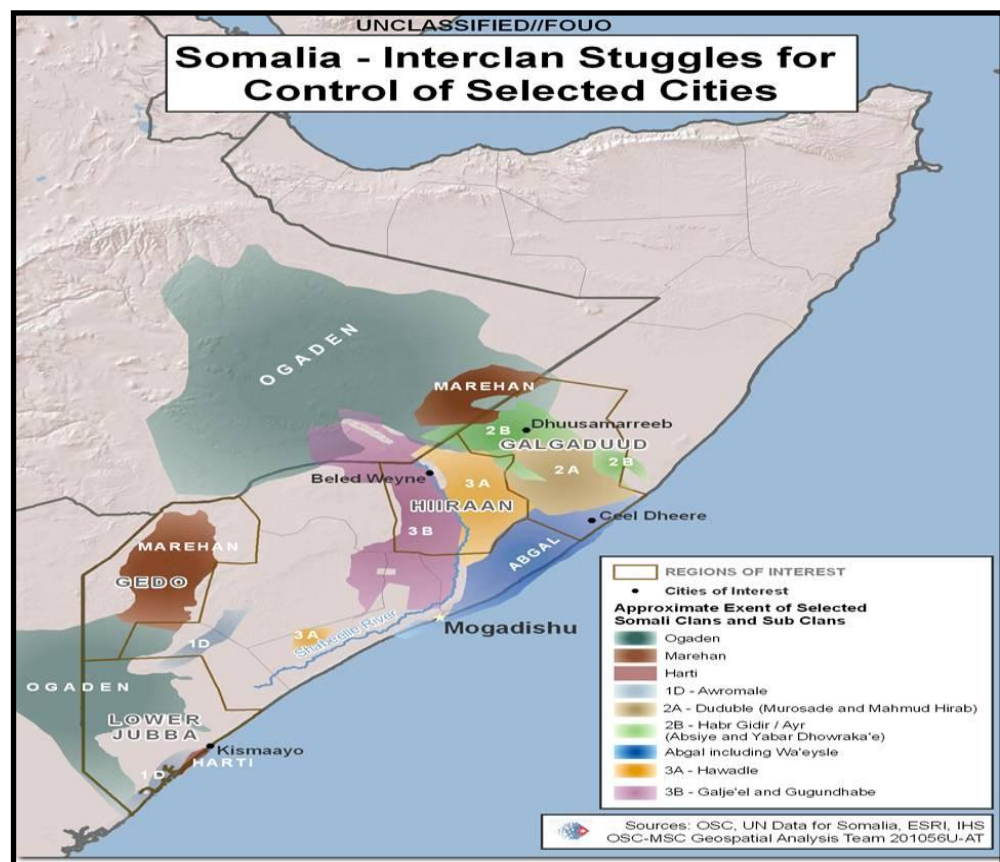
upswing in fundamentalism in the Middle East in the late 1970s and early 1980s also impacted Somalia, which was geographically close enough to the Arabian Peninsula to be influenced by certain Islamic fundamentalist teachings. Additionally, a xenophobic trend grew in tandem with an increasingly extremist religious trend. Distrust of outsiders and past persecution of Muslims by Westerners has long fueled anti-Western rhetoric in Somali mosques. Indeed, Western nations have intervened in Somalia since the British and Italians picked apart the country in the 19th century. Whereas mistrust of foreigners and their types of governance is commonplace, Islam offered and offers an alternative framework for rule and law that is perceived by some to be more indigenous and authentic.

On a political level, it is important to note that Islam has filled a gap in Somalia for a very specific reason – the Islamic Courts Union and other Muslim social and political structures have offered services and structure where successive attempts at central governments have failed since the early 1990s. In the last ten years '*Ulema* (Islamic scholars or religious leaders) have gained popular support both within the clans and amongst the average Somali person. More recently, the possibility of a strict implementation of *shari'a* (the all-encompassing legal order given by God and based on Quran and the subsequent body of Islamic law) has become a central contention of Islamists seeking to gain control.⁴ Finally, it is also of note that some Islamic teachings encourage the removal of leaders if they fail to provide for the welfare of the community. This may explain both the confrontation between Islamic extremists and successive governments as well as the continuous in-fighting between the clans.

Clan Politics

Intra and inter-clan fighting in Somalia can be explained partially in terms of clan organizational structure and multiple barriers inherent in the system which impede unity and contribute to instability in society. First of all, clan culture allows for the questioning of leaders at the tribal, regional, or national level. When leaders gain positions of leadership, they often have not developed means for the lowest members of the group to feel like valued members of the organization. Furthermore, clan leadership has in many cases tolerated the presence of foreigners to

include those associated with Al-Shabaab and the TFG. Somalis by their nature are suspicious of outsiders and tend to be paternalistic. Somalis value their self-



Graphic 1: Clan Span of Control

reliance, independence, and are traditional in their ways.⁵ Somalia expert, Bronwyn Bruton, has advocated a policy of disengagement from the TFG and constructive engagement with grass-root clan leadership.⁶ A World Bank study that involved three research centers in Somalia, Puntland, and Somaliland conducted in 2005, concluded that to really affect peace in Somalia, there should be a dedicated effort to develop relationships with the key clan stakeholders. As depicted in graphic one, a recent Open Source Center analysis demonstrates that the real power is not with either Al-Shabaab or the TFG, but with the clan, sub-clan, and sub-sub clan leadership⁷. According to the executive summary, “Although the conflict is ...involving..TFG and the ASWJ, and ...Al-Shabaab and Hisb al-Islam, the struggle for power and control is in large part determined by local sub-clan rivalries and allegiances rather than by religious or political ideology,”⁸In addition to the absence of such symbols or slogans, many leaders have also not used Islamic teachings to create an underlying doctrine to nurture followers and create synergy.⁹

Clan Organization In Somalia

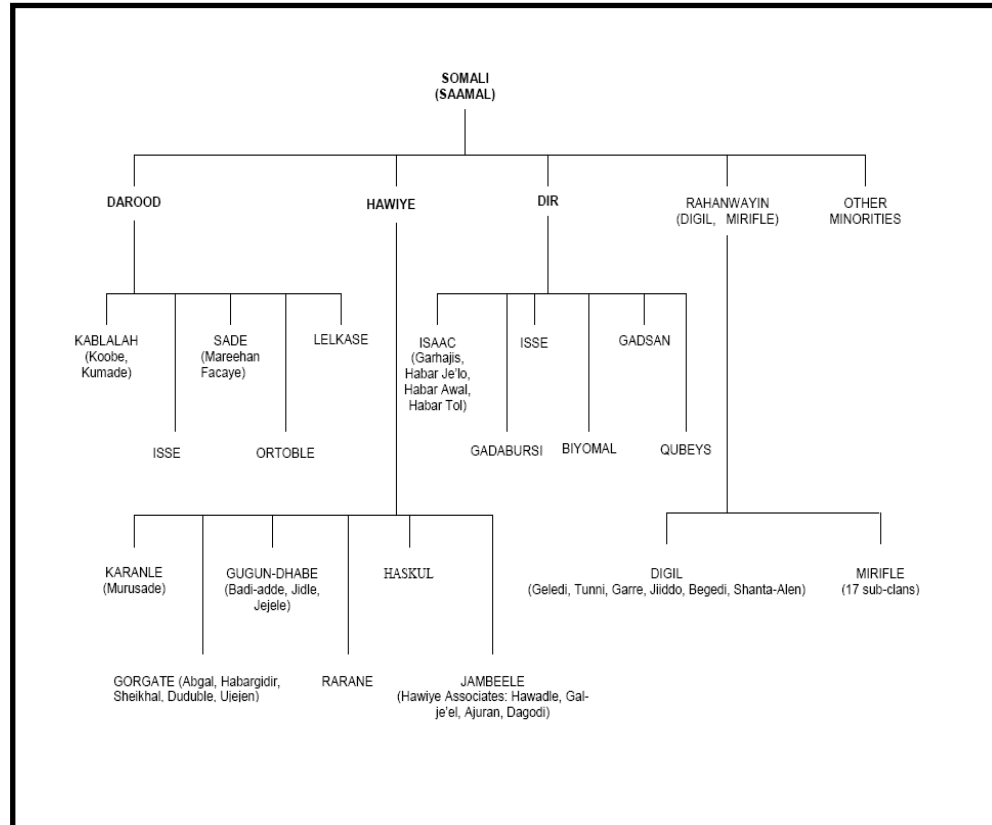
Understanding the clan structure in Somalia is both difficult and impossible to assess given that there has not been a formal census conducted since 1975.¹⁰ However, according to the World Bank study and Culture Grams 2010, there are six large clans (Darod, Isaak, Hawiye, Dir, Digil, and Rahanwayn) and a number of median to small groups. For the most part, these larger groups have taken over the urban areas and fertile parts of Somalia.¹¹ Despite these large clan groupings, loyalty can shift within the clan because of competition for resources, alliances of conveyance with outsiders, and a daily battle for clan leaders to live up to clan member

expectations to better the clan. The World Bank Study, in Figure 2, although more than five years old,

illustrates the delicate nature of clan organization.

Because clan leaders can serve as forces of division and

conflict



Graphic 2: Clan Organization (2005)

management, identifying with a clan or sub-clans are critical to survival for young Somali men.¹²

The centralization of power in clan leaders can undermine TFG and Al-Shabaab efforts to maintain control and peace.

In the current conflict, as in past ones, the conflicts between the TFG and Al-Shabaab seems to be one between political and religious organizations but in reality, clans and sub-clans are questing for power, positioning in a new government, and control of resources. The see-saw battles between the Darod/Marehan and the Darod/Ogaden clan over the port town of Kismaayo, and fighting between the Hawiye/Habar Gidir/Ayr and Hawiye/Duduble in the Galgaduud Region reflects the power struggle within the same clan. As pointed out earlier,

loyalty within the same clan does not exist on a permanent basis. Switching teams and fighting a once ally, now enemy, is not uncommon. Experts have concluded that a national government is impossible due to the “clanustization” of this complex environment. With clan leaders always seeking to consolidate gains, create alliances, and demonstrate the ability to survive, peace is a impossibility that has eluded past Somali attempts in creating a national government.

Whereas people who are tied ethnically tend to be more wary of fighting one another other, the absence of blood-ties means that inter-tribe conflict occurs more often. Additionally, lack of education plays a role in clan membership and instability. According to the United Nations Unite for Children website, only 22% of school-aged children attend school.¹³ This has profoundly impacted the literacy of the total population, which is slightly less than 38%.¹⁴ The idea of sacrificing such uneducated, low-level clan members appears acceptable to many senior clan leaders. Some charismatic clan leaders may justify most inter-tribal fighting according to a need to gain power, while savvy Islamic clan leaders legitimize their fighting as a *jihad*, or holy war¹⁵. According the latter, Muslims have a duty to fight non-believers. This means that many low-level clan members are essentially expendable to the upper-level leadership. Finally, clan leadership turn-over may be a result of a lack of anything akin to a militaries “Non-Commissioned Officer” (NCO) Corps. An NCO Corps represents a form of middle-manager who can provide hands-on supervision to young members because these low-level members do not feel a symbiotic sense of allegiance to their leadership; this allows for the possibility that another charismatic leader can garner support to help topple the leadership. Essentially, clan politics is a cycle of one leader following another promising to look after the members. When

the leader fails to provide for the good of the clan, clan culture allows for the replacement of the leader. This cycle will continue to affect Somali society because leadership fragility and organizational flux is not conducive to attaining a long-term, negotiated peace.¹⁶

MEASURING THE YEARS OF CONFLICT (2007-2009)

Methodologies for organizing information on insurgent groups are often hyper-analytical or far too technical, forcing intelligence or operational planners to disregard them as merely analytical tools rather than useful frameworks to inform decision-making. This paper endeavors to find a more basic design to optimize user-friendliness and encourage applicability in multiple future scenarios. The National Counter Terrorism Center has been tracking terrorism incidents since 2004 using open source reporting, field studies, and other non-classified collection methods. They have recently established a website called the World Wide Incident Tracking Sytem¹⁷ While intended to provide information on the number of terrorist incidents worldwide, I intend to use this site to extract data to determine the number of incidents by time-period and location. Specifically, I have narrowed my search to the years 2007-2009 because data on Somalia was not collected until after 2007.

Using this data, I will attempt to determine which side of the conflict is being more successful. Simply stated, if the number of attacks/incidents have not lowered over the last 2-3 years, then we can conclude that Al-Shabaab's influence and control continues to grow despite the millions being invested in the TFG and the African Union. Additionally, using the same data, I want to determine which provinces in Somalia are the most dangerous. Without using any

statistical analysis or being too technical, my goal is to determine whether the current policy (funding) is succeeding or failing. Finally, this paper does not suggest this methodology shows conclusively or prove statistically the reliability of using this method; however, it does provide a trend that can be further refined and explored as a means to quantify results.

Several additional caveats are in order here. The methodology is not intended to suggest a typology applicable to all militant structures, either in the Horn of Africa or elsewhere. Indeed, it must be noted that not all reporting of attacks or incidents could possibly be captured by the NCTC. The NCTC is depended upon fearless journalists operating in an area where their profession is not respected and several of their members have been killed by unsympathetic forces.

Which Side Is Winning the War?

In August 2009, United States Secretary of State Hillary R. Clinton stated that the United States was prepared to provide funding and other resources to help the struggling members of the African Union in Somalia and the Transitional Federal Government of President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed.¹⁸ In addition, in testimony to Congress and in press releases, General Ward and Vice Admiral Moeller, have testified that the United States will adopt an indirect approach when dealing with Somalia. Rather than committing United States forces, which analysts estimate will take as much as 100,000¹⁹, to really make a difference; the United States will continue to provide military advisors and trainers to AU member nations. Yet, despite the aid that has been poured into Somalia and training of AU troops by the US military, trends indicate

that Al-Shabaab continues to grow militarily. Their capability is actually better in 2010 than one to two years ago. NCTC incident reporting confirms these statements, suggesting that unless there is a change to a military strategy, the attacks will continue to increase yearly. Graphic 3 provides an illustration of the number of attacks using data from 2007-2009.

The data suggest that the highest period for attacks over last three years has been the October

Incidents/Attacks in Somalia					
Month	Years			Total (Month)	Total Quarter
	2007	2008	2009		
January	5	34	41	80	321
February	38	46	45	129	
March	30	44	38	112	
April	7	30	42	79	311
May	32	40	50	122	
June	42	41	27	110	
July	58	24	32	114	361
August	72	28	43	143	
September	38	35	31	104	
October	46	30	38	114	366
November	20	50	51	121	
December	26	42	63	131	
Total	414	444	501	1359	

Graphic 3: Incidents/Attacks in Somalia

through December time-period. More importantly, this chart shows that there has been a jump in incidents from 2007 to 2009. Over the last three years, there has been a 21% increase in incidents. While not included in this graphic, the NCTC also reported that 67% of these incidents from 2004 through May 2010 involved Islamic Extremists.²⁰ While Africa Command is committed to helping the African Union with training and advisors, a better use of funding could possibly be by providing Intelligence analysts and operational research specialists who can look at the cost-to-benefit ratio. Analysts and operational research specialists could potentially provide statistical proof that a change is needed in the strategy currently being used by the TFG and their supporting allies. US military leadership in both Iraq and Afghanistan have undertaken this approach to provide evidence to help in their decision-making.

Where are the most dangerous locations in Somalia? Everywhere, Stupid!

Incidents/Locations in Somalia					
	Years				
Location (By Province)	2007	2008	2009	Total (Locations)	Top 5 Dangerous Locations
Bakool	0	5	12	17	
Banaadir	341	212	219	772	1
Bari	2	15	15	32	
Bay	16	82	41	139	2
Galguduud	1	13	13	27	
Gedo	3	6	18	27	
Hiiraan	15	31	55	101	3
Jubbada Dhexe	1	1	4	6	
Jubbada Hoose	10	15	35	60	5
Mudug	1	10	17	28	
Nugaal	2	2	2	6	
Sanaag	0	0	0	0	
Shabellah Dhexe	1	11	21	33	
Shabellah Hoose	17	36	44	97	4
Sool	0	1	1	2	
Togdheer	0	1	0	1	
Unknown	4	1	6	11	
Woqooy	0	0	1	1	
Galbeed	0	2	0	2	

Source: NCTC World Wide Incident Tracking System
<https://wits.nctc.gov/FederalDiscoverWITS/index.do?N=0>

¹ Bronwyn E. Bruton, *Somalia A New Approach*, Council on Foreign Relations Center for Preventive Action, March 2010, 3-5.

² This is the shortened form for *Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahidin*, or Mujahidin Youth Movement (MYM). “Somalia: No Peace without Islam video,” MYM Media Section, translation in OSC AFP2008123041008, December 28, 2008; Institute for Security Studies, “Situation Report: Somalia: Understanding Al-Shabaab,” dated 3 June 2009; the US Government included the MYM in their list of Foreign Terrorist Organizations in 2008.

³ “OSC Media Aid: Main Insurgent Groups Adeptly Use Media,” OSC Media Aid in English, AFF20090818049001, August 18, 2009; “Islamists pledge to continue fighting foreign troops in Somalia” translation in OSC AFP20090409950055, April 8, 2009; “Al-Shabab calls for renewed fighting against Somali government, AU troops,” translation in OSC AFP20090412950031 *Universal TV* in Somali 1900 GMT, April 11, 2009.

⁴ David Zeidan, “The Islamic Fundamentalist View Of Life As a Perennial Battle,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, December 2001, 26.

⁵ *Somalia*, Culture Grams 2010 World Edition, 2.

⁶ Stephanie Schwartz, *International Engagement with Somali*, United States Institute Of Peace, PEACEBRIEF, dated January 14, 2010; *Ibid*, Bruton, 4-5.

⁷ “OSC Analysis: Somalia Clan Dynamics Trump Ideology in Somali Conflict,” OSC AFP 201005133080001, May 13, 2010.

⁸ *Ibid*, AFP 201005133080001, May 13, 2010.

⁹ Analysis by one of the authors as a result of a class lecture given by Mr. Thomas Dowling in REG 541, October 4, 2003

¹⁰ *Conflict in Somalia: Drivers and Dynamics*, World Bank, January 2005, 7.

¹¹ *Ibid*, *Conflict in Somalia*; *Ibid*, *World Grams 2010*.

¹² *Ibid*, *Conflict in Somalia*, 16.

¹³ United Nations Unite For The Children, *UNICEF-Somalia*. URL: http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/somalia_statistics.html#56, As of 18 January 2010.

¹⁴ CIA - The World Factbook -- Somalia, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>, as of 20 December, 2009. This number is disputed, with the Somali Information Resource giving a 24% literacy rate.

¹⁵ Abdulkadir M. Nur (Eno), Address to the meeting on Somalia’s Finance and Economic Issue, URL: http://www.hiiraan.com/op2/2008/apr/the_somali_youth_%E2%80%93_somalia_s_lost_generation.asp, March 28-29, 2008; United Nation Security Council, *Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia*; 20 July 2009, p.15.

¹⁶ Analysis by the author, result of a class lecture given by Mr. Thomas Dowling in REG 541, October 4, 2003.

¹⁷ National Counter Terrorism Center Worldwide Incident Tracking System, URL: <https://wits.nctc.gov/FederalDiscoverWITS/index.do?N=0>.

¹⁸ “A Talk With Somalia’s President,” Interview with Jeffrey Gettleman, New York Times, September 17, 2009, URL: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/17/world/Africa/17somaliaq-a.html?pagewanted=page>, accessed September 18, 2009.

¹⁹ Ibid, Bruton, 21.

²⁰ Ibid, NCTC.